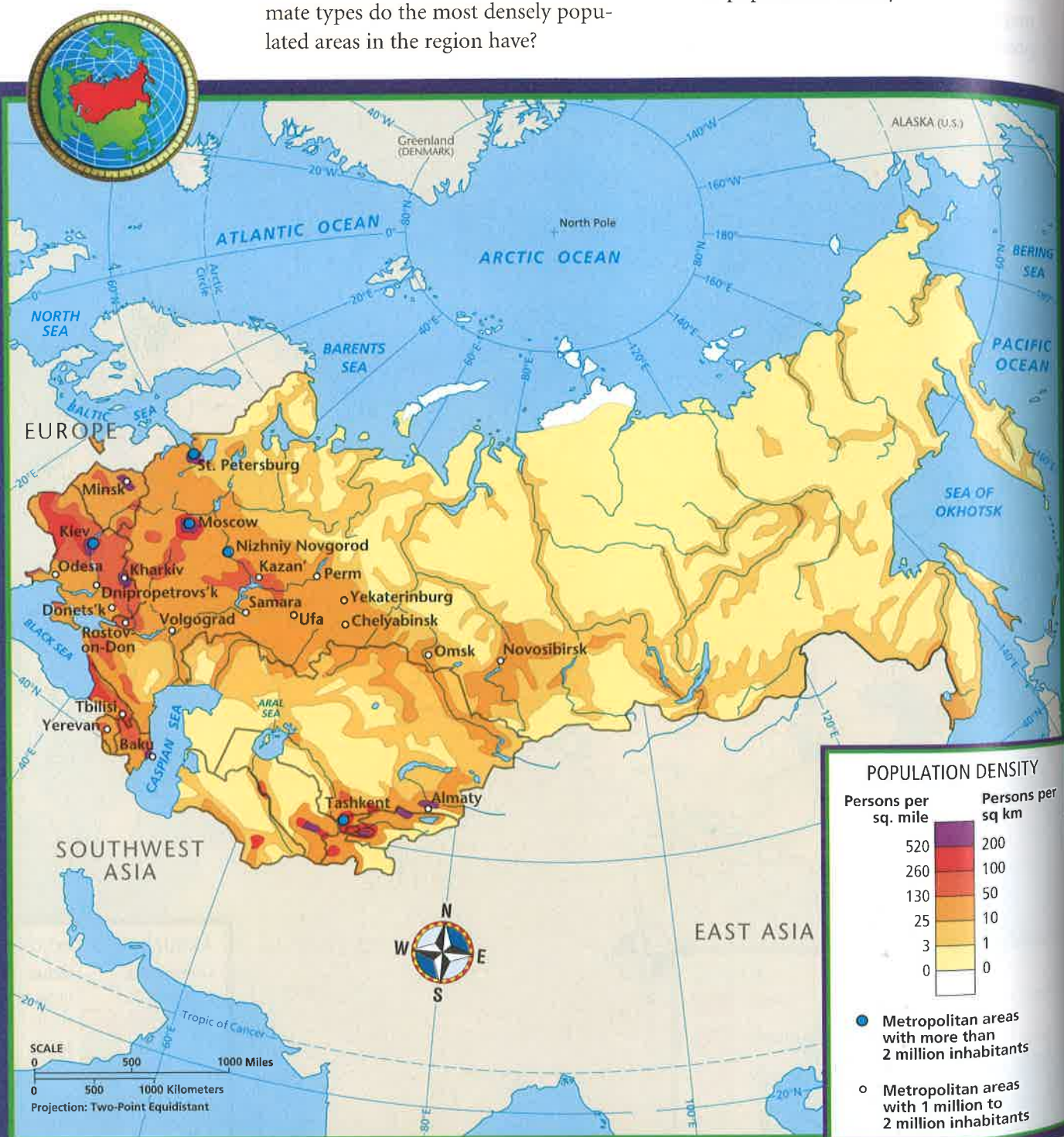


Russia and Northern Eurasia: Population

- Places and Regions** Which Russian metropolitan areas have more than 2 million inhabitants?
- Environment and Society** Compare this map to the climate map. Which climate types do the most densely populated areas in the region have?

Critical Thinking

- Analyzing Information** Compare this map to the physical map. How are rivers and lakes in Siberia related to population density?



Russia and Northern Eurasia: Land Use and Resources

UNIT 5 ATLAS

- Environment and Society** Compare this map to the climate map. What is the main economic activity in areas with tundra and arid climates?
- Environment and Society** How have Russians adapted Siberian rivers to produce energy?

Critical Thinking

- Analyzing Information** Compare this map to the climate map. How do you think farmers have adapted to environmental conditions in arid areas? How can you tell?



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Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus



Landforms and Rivers

Together Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus cover about 12 percent of the world's land area. Russia alone extends more than 6,000 miles (9,600 km) from east to west. The huge country stretches across **Eurasia** from the Baltic Sea and Black Sea to the Pacific Ocean. *Eurasia* is the name given to Europe and Asia when they are considered one landmass or continent. Russia is the world's largest country in area. No other country shares borders with more countries. Much of northern Russia lies above the Arctic Circle.

The Ural Mountains divide the region. Areas west of the Urals—including Ukraine and Belarus—are part of Europe. Those to the east lie in Asia. The part of Russia that is east of the Urals is known as Siberia. The region's remaining three countries—Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia—are in the Caucasus Mountains. These high mountains lie between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The highest point in Europe is on Russia's southern border with Georgia in the Caucasus Mountains. There Mount Elbrus soars to 18,510 feet (5,642 m). An active tectonic zone, the Caucasus region suffers from severe earthquakes.

Ice-age glaciers and long-term erosion shaped the broad plains that are the region's major landforms. Much of the European area shares the Northern European Plain with countries farther west. Thus, the European areas have low elevations. In fact, Belarus has no point over 1,135 feet (346 m) above sea level. Southern Belarus and northwestern Ukraine contain the Pripet Marshes. These marshes make up the largest swamp in Europe. Ukraine's highest point is located where the Carpathian Mountains cross the country's western borders. Peaks on the Crimean Peninsula in southeastern Ukraine, a popular tourist area, are slightly lower.

Russia's Ural Mountains are more like high rolling hills. For this reason, road and rail crossings there need no major tunnels. West of the Urals, the gently rolling terrain of the Volga River basin dominates the heart of Russia. East of the Urals is the thinly populated West Siberian Plain. The Ob River

Plains like the Ukrainian farmland pictured here spread for vast distances across Eurasia.



creates a huge swamp area there. In the Russian Far East, beyond the Central Siberian Plateau, are high snowy ranges. Among these are the active volcanoes of the Kamchatka (kuhm-CHAH-t-kuh) Peninsula.

The Dnieper, Don, and Volga are three of the largest south-flowing rivers in the region. These important shipping channels also supply water for hydroelectric projects and cities. The major Siberian rivers, such as the Ob, Yenisey, and Lena, flow northward to the Arctic Ocean from mountains in the south. One of the Yenisey's tributaries, the Angara River, flows through southern Siberia from Lake Baikal. Sometimes called the Jewel of Siberia for its beauty, Lake Baikal is the deepest lake in the world. It holds about one fifth of the world's freshwater!

READING CHECK: *Physical Systems* What factors shaped the region's main landform type?

Climates and Vegetation

Russians sometimes joke that winter lasts for 12 months and then summer begins. As you can see on a map, much of the region is in the same latitudes as northern Canada and Alaska. The weather can be harsh. However, the region offers a wealth of resources to those who can brave the elements.

Climates Much of the country lies in the humid continental, subarctic, and tundra climate regions. During the year's five coldest months, rivers and canals throughout the region freeze. In these cold climates a polluted icy fog often hangs over cities during winter. Created by fumes and smoke from cities, this fog is trapped over the cities by the cold air. In the region's northern areas permafrost is widespread and deep. When the permafrost's surface layer melts in summer, buildings tilt, highways buckle, and railroad tracks slip sideways.

Harsh conditions prevail in the area's eastern two thirds. Any ocean winds that might bring moisture and moderate temperatures cannot reach far inland. As a result, parts of the interior are very dry. Siberia's severe winters often bring temperatures below -40°F (-40°C). At one of the coldest places outside of Antarctica, Verkhoyansk in Siberia, the thermometer has reached -90°F (-68°C).

The region's European third has the mildest climates. In addition, the soils there are better for agriculture and human settlement. Moisture from the Atlantic Ocean far to the west brings winter snow and summer rain. In the Russian Far East, coastal areas receive rain-bearing winds from the Pacific Ocean.

The cold climate and small amount of warm coastline reduce Russia's access to the sea. The Arctic Ocean can freeze all



Few creatures can live more than about 400 feet (120 m) below the Black Sea's surface. Too little oxygen and too much hydrogen sulfide create an environment that is poisonous to most life forms, including most bacteria.

Although in much of Siberia snowfall is relatively light, the cold temperatures ensure that the snow stays on the ground for months. The village of Ust'-Anzas, in southern Siberia, lies under a blanket of snow. The sign on the building tells travelers that inside they can buy tickets on Aeroflot, Russia's national airline.

